



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

NUTRITION AUSTRALIA ACT INCORPORATED



Nutrition  
Australia

Nutrition Australia ACT Incorporated - A05428

Chifley Health & Wellbeing Hub

5/70 Maclaurin Crescent

Chifley ACT 2606

NA ACT is also the Registered office of the Australia Nutrition Foundation Incorporated

**Ph:** 02 6162 2583

**Email:** [info@act.nutritionaustralia.org](mailto:info@act.nutritionaustralia.org)

**Web:** [www.nutritionaustralia.org/act](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/act)

Nutrition Australia ACT Incorporated is a registered Health Promotion Charity with the ACNC and has deductible gift recipient status with the Australian Taxation Office.



ACT Nutrition Support Service is the registered Trademark of Nutrition Australia ACT.

## CONTENTS

Contents.....	3
About us.....	4
2024 Highlights .....	6
NDIS Services.....	6
Kids Cooking Classes.....	7
Feeding Healthy Futures™ .....	8
FUELLING EVERYBODY EVERY DAY (FEED)® .....	9
Nourishing Little Minds® .....	10
ACT Nutrition Support Service® .....	12
Community nutrition activities and partnerships.....	13
Government activities and contracts.....	14
Advocacy and Partnerships.....	16
Media .....	20
National Healthy Lunchbox Week 4-10 February 2024.....	21
University of Canberra student placements and interns.....	22
Future Directions .....	23



## ABOUT US

Nutrition Australia ACT Inc. (NAACT) is a not-for-profit, non-government, registered health promotion charity. NAACT operates through a Committee of Management ensuring good governance practices and management.

The ACT Nutrition Support Service is a registered business name of Nutrition Australia ACT Inc.

### Committee of Management

The Committee of Management comprises of volunteer committee members with experience in policy, education, regulation, clinical dietetics, research and health promotion.

**Chair** Gillian Duffy

**Secretary** Vacant

**Treasurer** Amanda Borowski

**Members** Brad Tarrant

Michelle Minehan

Julie Priestly

Scott Smith

Allison Wood

Jenny Sandilands

**Public Officer** Leanne Elliston

**National Directors** Gillian Duffy

**NAACT Staff** Leanne Elliston APD, Executive Officer (full time)

Cara Cook APD, Project Officer (part time)

Amanda Borowski APD, Project Officer (part time)

Freya Vos APD, Project Officer (part time)

**Accounts** Mary Harrison, Bookkeeper

**Financial Auditor** See Accounting

## Our purpose

*To enable people in the ACT to make informed food choices and create healthier communities.*

## Our strategic objectives for 2022 – 2024

### Support, inform and engage

- Be a credible and independent voice of nutrition information
- Engage with individuals, organisations and members
- Collaborate with community groups and organisations
- Translate evidence-based scientific information into practical knowledge
- Provide consistent and timely messaging and information

### Build a leading not-for profit

- Grow our profile in the region
- Demonstrate public health nutrition leadership
- Maintain awareness of the nutrition related issues for the region
- Encourage and empower staff to deliver quality services
- Maintain and build on existing governance structures

### Advocate for sustainable healthy food environment

- Raise the profile on importance of nutrition
- Influence and encourage government and organisations
- Develop strategic alliances
- Influence policy direction
- Promote equitable access to healthy affordable food

## Our commitments

As an incorporated association, NAACT adheres to the obligations of the ACNC and is compliant with the ACT Incorporated Association legislation and regulations. We undertake independent financial audits and maintain appropriate insurance policies. In addition, all our staff and volunteers adhere to legislative requirements including the Working with Vulnerable People Act 2011.

NAACT employees hold current accreditation with relevant health professional bodies to ensure best practice guidelines are adhered to at all times.



## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

### NDIS SERVICES

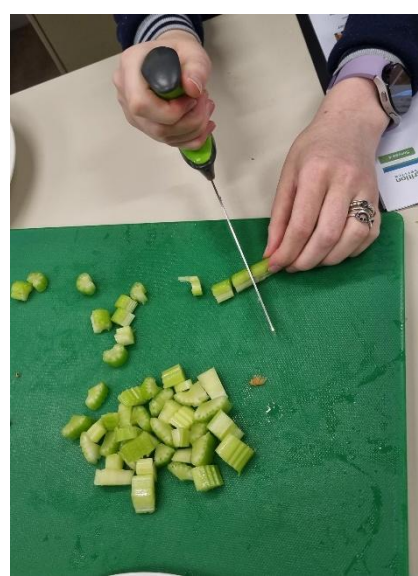
#### COOKING CLINICS

Our cooking clinics are tailored to meet the individual needs of participants, helping them build confidence and practical skills to prepare nutritious meals, make healthier food choices, and manage their unique dietary requirements. Delivered by our Accredited Practising Dietitians in our fully accessible food skills kitchen, each participant also receives personalised nutrition support as part of the program.

In 2024 NAACT doubled its NDIS services, delivering a total of 120 individual cooking clinics to 14 adult and 3 child NDIS participants.



Registered  
NDIS  
Provider





## KIDS COOKING CLASSES

Our school holiday cooking classes continue to offer children fun, hands-on experiences with food in our welcoming Food Skills Kitchen. These sessions give children the chance to explore fresh, seasonal ingredients while building practical cooking skills and confidence in a safe and supportive environment.

As part of the experience, children also spend time in our kitchen garden tasting herbs and harvesting produce for their meals. Food scraps are fed to the worm farm which nourishes the soil and supports future harvests. This holistic approach helps children understand the food cycle and deepens their connection to sustainable food practices.

In 2024, demand for our program soared, with every session fully booked. We delivered six weeks of engaging workshops to 144 enthusiastic young participants resulting in a 64% growth compared to the previous year. This strong response highlights the growing appetite for food education that fosters lifelong healthy habits.

64% program growth with 6 weeks of cooking workshops to 144 children



*"Thank you for being so patient with the children and getting them exposed to healthy eating options. I love how the kids get to pick vegetables from your garden and put them into their cooking. The kids love the recipes and enjoy cooking with you, thanks!"*

*"My daughter had a wonderful time at class. We use the book at home to cook other things. It's fantastic. The ACT Nutrition team are wonderful. I recommend to others all the time!"*

*"First time we have done this holiday and the kids loved it! It was so good to have a friendly welcome, plus everything was set up early and ready to go."*



### Funded by ACT Health, Healthy Canberra Grant 2022-2025

Feeding Healthy Futures aims to promote the importance of good nutrition and establishing a foundation of healthy eating habits during the first 1,000 days of life.

In 2024, our early years nutrition program supported parents through their child's first year of life. We delivered eight public group programs, each running over three weeks, reaching 85 parents with practical, evidence-based advice during the critical infancy and toddler stages.

We also partnered with four community organisations to deliver tailored sessions for families from vulnerable backgrounds. These three-week programs were embedded into existing services and delivered on-site, resulting in 12 group programs that reached an additional 101 parents.



#### Public facing cohort:

- 8 group programs
- 24 sessions
- 85 parents

#### Organisation cohort:

- 12 tailored group programs
- 36 sessions
- 101 parents.

The Feeding Healthy Futures will conclude in 2025 with thorough evaluation and exploration of scalable models for broader ACT implementation.

### VALUED PARTNERS

Partnering organisations that took part in the community specific sessions in 2024 were:

- Canberra College Cares
- West Belconnen Child and Family Centre
- Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation
- Perinatal Wellbeing Centre



## FUELLING EVERYBODY EVERY DAY (FEED)<sup>®</sup>

**Funded by ACT Health, 2023-2026 Healthy Canberra Grants: Focus on Supporting Healthy and Active Living for Children and Young People**

FEED fosters positive food relationships for children and young people aged 3 - 18 years with atypical or disordered eating patterns. Delivered in collaboration with a Play Therapist, the 8-week group-based program is tailored to three age cohorts: 3-5 years, 6-12 years and 13-18 years.



In 2024, a total of 12 x 8-week programs were delivered reaching **96 children and young people with 57 parents and caregivers**.

FEED has generated plenty of positive feedback from participants. A thorough program evaluation will take place at the conclusion of the program in 2025.

*"My child is still asking what the vegetable of the week is... I can see a difference in him. He's more curious about vegetables and finds them fun." — Parent (3–5 years cohort)*

*"He's tolerating family mealtimes better — that's a huge positive step." — CHS Dietitian*

*"Providing low-pressure environments for feeding is a game-changer... early intervention like this prevents escalation." — Parent (3–5 years cohort)*



In December 2024, FEED was acknowledged at the **PCYC P180 Graduation Ceremony** with a **Certificate of Appreciation** for its contribution to positive nutrition outcomes in the ACT community.

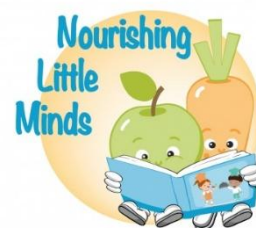
The FEED program will continue in 2025 with associated evaluation and exploration of scalable models for broader ACT implementation.

## VALUED PARTNERS



## NOURISHING LITTLE MINDS®

Nourishing Little Minds (NLM) is an early childhood program that increases children's interest in trying new foods through positive experiences. Developed from previous grant funding from ACT Health, it promotes establishing a healthy relationship with food, focusing on increasing vegetables and variety.



### Nourishing Little Minds in Early Childhood Settings

Nourishing Little Minds in Early Childhood (NLMEC) aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS), and is aimed at enhancing educators' knowledge, skills and confidence in facilitating positive food experiences for children.

Following the success of the ACT Health Healthy Canberra Grant program 2021-2023, a statistical analysis of the evaluation was undertaken in 2024 with the results presented at the Dietitians Australia conference in August 2024.

Statistical analysis of the data, collected from 986 educators across 79 ECEC centres presented the following key outcomes:

- Significant increase in educator awareness and confidence to engage children in healthy food-themed games and activities.
- Significant increase in educator role modelling of healthy eating, utilisation of food-related learning materials and provision of child-centred sensory food experiences.

This program demonstrated that APD led, face-to-face PD sessions motivate and empower early childhood educators to integrate healthy food-related, play-based experiences into their daily programming as part of a whole of centre approach to healthy food environments.



## IMB Bank Community Foundation Grant

After the success of the Nourishing Little Minds 4-week program with Libraries ACT, NAACT explored avenues to upscale the project in 2024. In doing so, we were successful in receiving an IMB Bank Community Foundation Grant to upscale NLM by training health professionals to deliver the program in local communities, especially regional areas, ensuring lasting health benefits and behaviour change for children in their first 2000 days.

The professional development package will involve producing a facilitator manual with associated online training for Health Promotion Officers working within NSW Health Southern NSW local health district. The online training package will then be utilised to scale the program more widely among various health districts nationally.



## ACT NUTRITION SUPPORT SERVICE®

The ACT Nutrition Support Service® (ACTNSS) provides locally targeted nutrition support and advice across the ACT.

Through multi-phased communication strategies, practical nutrition information is developed and disseminated among the ACT community via subscribers, social media and the ACTNSS website.

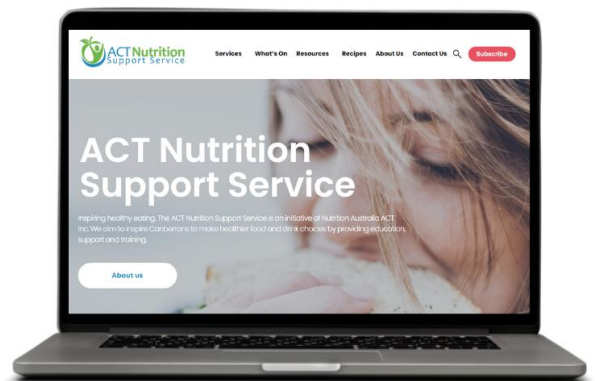


### 2024 Website stats

- 24K Users
- 51K Pageviews

#### Most popular pages

- Recipes: 4.3K
- Homepage: 3.3K
- Kids school holiday cooking classes: 2K



## Social Media

In 2024, ACTNSS continued its active social media presence using Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn as its key social media platforms.



Facebook @ACTNutritionSupportService  
3.7K followers



Instagram @actnutritionsupportservice  
115 followers



LinkedIn @ACTNutritionSupportService  
250 followers

### 2024 Social media stats

#### Facebook

- 70 Posts
- 21K Reach
- 794 Engagements

#### Instagram

- 40 Posts
- 708 Reach
- 168 Engagements

#### LinkedIn

- 45 Posts
- 5.5K Reach
- 470 Engagements

*The 'ACT Nutrition Support Service' is a registered trademark of Nutrition Australia ACT Inc.*



## COMMUNITY NUTRITION ACTIVITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

NAACT prides itself in building strong relationships with local government and non-government organisations to deliver successful services and programs supporting healthy food choices in the ACT community.

In 2024, we worked with and delivered a range of tailored nutrition services for the following community organisations:

- Barnardo's 'Cook-a-long, play-a-long' program
- Canberra Development Clinic
- Canberra Blind Society
- CANteen
- Carers ACT
- Communities at work – 'Growing Healthy Communities' program
- Kippax Uniting Care
- Stroke Foundation
- Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services – youth cooking workshops
- Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation





## GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTS

### MEALS IN SCHOOLS PILOT

In 2024 NAACT partnered with the ACT Education Directorate on the Meals in Schools pilot. The 12-month pilot, starting in July 2024, provides free breakfast and lunch to students 3 days per week at five participating ACT public schools.

NAACT provides the following nutrition expertise and support for the project:

- working with the external food provider, Embrace Disability Group, to develop balanced and enjoyable menus that meet children's nutritional needs;
- ensuring meals meet the requirements of the ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy and;
- facilitate feedback from students, families and schools on menu success and challenges.

The pilot, running until July 2025, has provided NAACT with incredible learnings that will contribute to the \$32 million expansion of the program to 20 public schools over the next four years.



### NUTRITION SUPPORT SERVICE IN SCHOOLS

In 2024, the ACT government reinstated funding for public school canteen menu assessments in alignment with the ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy. NAACT has been engaged to visit all ACT public school canteens, assess their menus and provide tailored nutrition advice to canteen staff to support the provision of nourishing menu items.

As the trusted provider of nutrition support and advice to ACT schools since 2011, we are proud to continue our work in the school canteen sector—supporting children to access healthy food and enjoy positive, joyful food experiences at school.

## NGUNNAWAL BUSH HEALING FARM

In 2024, NAACT delivered four 8-week healthy eating programs to clients of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm. Participant numbers ranged from 3 to 8 per program. Each session focused on affordable, convenient healthy eating education and was tailored to the food preferences and dietary needs of participants to support engagement and build strong rapport.

Flexibility was encouraged, with participants adapting recipes based on personal preferences, fostering food exploration and peer learning. The facilitator further strengthened relationships by joining morning check-ins and sharing meals with clients and staff, creating a welcoming space for open conversation and informal nutrition education.



## ALEXANDER MACONOCHIE CENTRE COOKING WORKSHOPS

In July 2024, NAACT commenced delivery of a 20-week healthy cooking program for female detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). This program aimed at providing a meaningful and engaging activity for the detainees while building skills to prepare simple, affordable meals for themselves and their families.

NAACT staff needed to be innovative and resourceful in developing and adapting existing recipes to meet the foods available on the approved food item list accessible to detainees.

A total of 29 weekly sessions were delivered to an average of 4 participants each week.

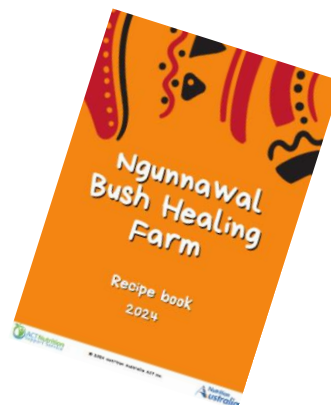
While the primary focus was cooking and nutrition, the program also served as a positive outlet for some participants preparing for rehabilitation and reintegration, highlighting its broader impact beyond the kitchen.

## ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

NAACT strives to work in collaboration with local organisations and networks that share a common goal of supporting healthy eating for all Canberrans.

Our key partners and stakeholders in 2024 included:

- ACT Health, Preventative and Population Health, ACT Government
- ACT Health, Health Protection Service, ACT Government
- ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety, ACT Government
- ACT Education Directorate
- Barnardos
- Canberra College Cares
- Canberra Development Clinic
- Canberra Region Community Services
- Carers ACT
- Community Services Directorate, ACT Government
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Dietitians Australia
- Environment, Planning & Sustainable Development Directorate, ACT Government
- Gallilee School
- Kippax Uniting Care
- Mackillop Family Services
- Migrant and Refugee Settlement Service
- National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
- Northside Community Services
- PCYC
- Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
- The Regional Independent
- University of Canberra
- West Belconnen Child and Family Centre
- Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation



NAACT staff participate in networking events and meetings to improve the health of the ACT population. Where possible we also participate in national forums and activities advocating for nutrition access and equity for all Australians.

In 2024, this included representation at:

- ACT Food Regulation Reference Group
- ACT Food at School Collaborative Working Group
- ACT Healthy Schools Network
- ACT Public Health Nutrition Network
- Australia Health Promotion Association 2024 Conference
- Federation of Canteens in Schools
- Dietitians Australia 2024 Conference
- Global Child Nutrition Forum, 2024
- Health Protection Food Regulation Advisory Committee, ACT Government
- National Nutrition Network for early childhood education and care
- National School Food Network
- Parliamentary Friends of Nutrition
- Parliamentary Friends of Ageing
- University of Canberra Discipline of Nutrition and Dietetics Program Advisory Committee
- Women in Public Health Launch





## Leadership in School Food Advocacy

A standout moment in 2024 was our organisation's representation at the **Global Child Nutrition Forum** in Osaka, Japan. Our dietitians, Leanne Elliston and Cara Cook, joined over 420 delegates from 84 countries to engage with global leaders in the design and delivery of school meal programs.

This unique opportunity not only strengthened our ties with the international school meals community but also reinforced the critical role that food plays in schools - supporting children's health, development, and educational outcomes.

As part of the visit, Leanne had the privilege of sharing lunch with students at a Japanese elementary school and witnessing *Shokuiku* (Japan's nationally implemented approach to food education) in practice. This firsthand experience powerfully underscored the gap in Australia's current approach, where school food remains an underutilised lever for improving child wellbeing and learning.



With more than 75% of countries around the world investing in school meal programs, this experience has deepened our commitment to advocating for a national, equitable approach to school food in Australia - one that ensures all children have the nourishment they need to thrive.





## Parliamentary Friends of Nutrition

In June 2024, our CEO Leanne Elliston represented Nutrition Australia at the Parliamentary Friends of Nutrition event at Parliament House where she presented to members of parliament on the crucial role of nutrition in early childhood.

In collaboration with Dietitians Australia and the National Nutrition Network in Early Childhood Education and Care, Nutrition Australia called on the Federal Government to strengthen implementation of the National Quality Standards in the provision of food in early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to ensure all children accessing ECEC services are given the best possible nutrition foundation early in life.

Nutrition Australia continues to support Dietitians Australia at its Parliamentary Friends of Nutrition events in a collaborative effort to raise the profile of nutrition towards improving the health and wellbeing of Australians.



## MEDIA

Nutrition Australia ACT is regularly sought to provide nutrition commentary and advice across media channels both locally and nationally. In 2024, NAACT experienced 36 media appearances across 16 media outlets.

### Radio



- ABC Canberra
- ABC NSW Central
- ABC NSW Regional
- ABC Adelaide
- ABC Country WA
- ABC Sydney
- ABC Adelaide
- ABC Mid North Coast
- Five AA
- Amplify CBR (Mix 106.3 Hit 104.7)
- National News Radio
- 6PR Perth

### Online



- ABC News online
- SBS News
- House of Wellness

### Television



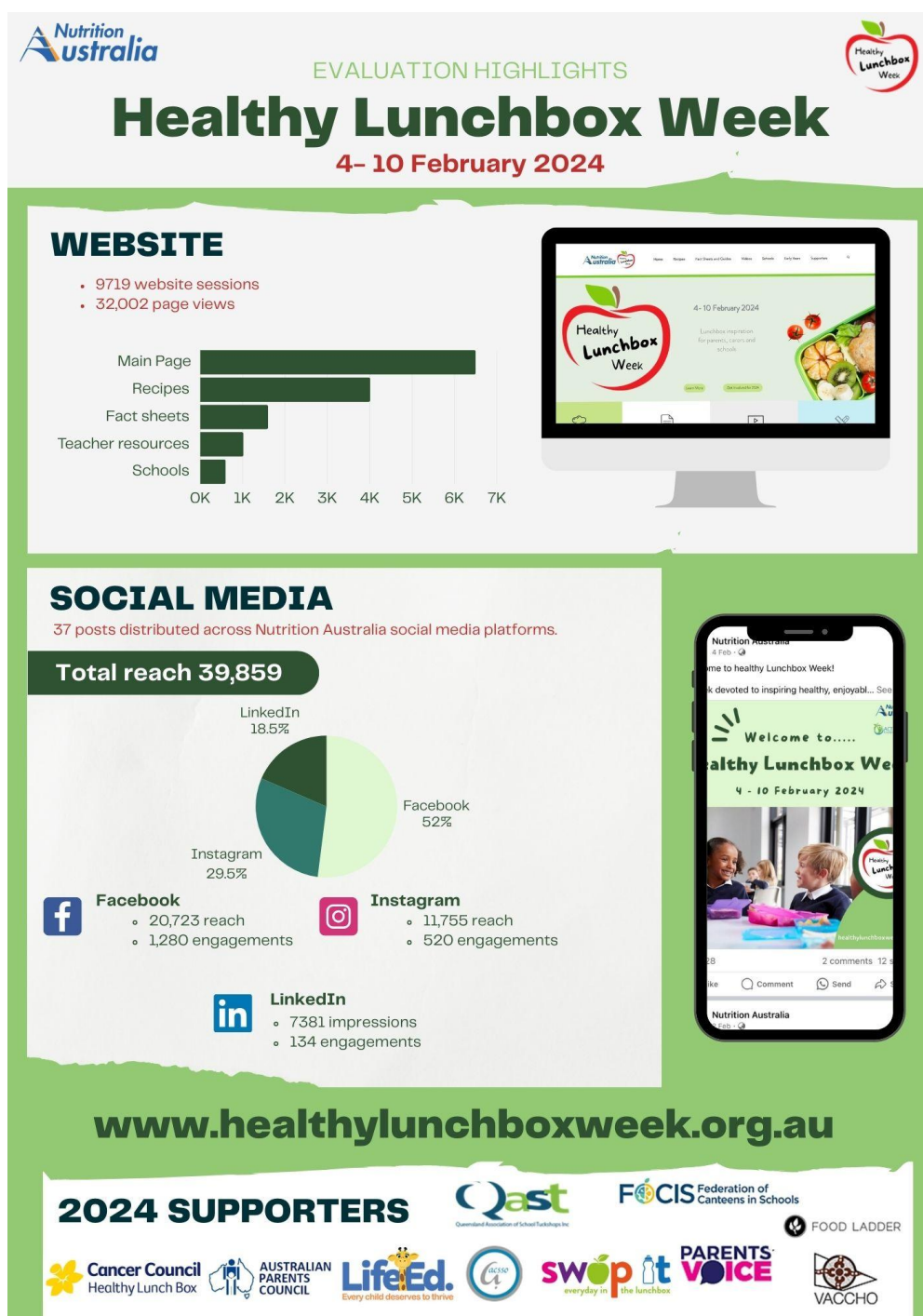
- ABC News



## NATIONAL HEALTHY LUNCHBOX WEEK 4-10 FEBRUARY 2024

NAACT coordinates the national Healthy Lunchbox Week (HLW) campaign which aims to inspire Australian families to create healthy and enjoyable lunchboxes.

In 2024, NAACT led a successful Healthy Lunchbox Week across the National Nutrition Australia social media channels and through the designated Healthy Lunchbox Week website.





## UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA STUDENT PLACEMENTS AND INTERNS

In 2024, NAACT continued its strong relationship with the University of Canberra (UC) by supervising six Master of Nutrition and Dietetics students, each undertaking six weeks of community nutrition placement. Placement projects included:

- Interim Evaluation of Fuelling Everybody Every Day (FEED) program for young people aged 13-18 years
- Interim Evaluation and Review of Fuelling Everybody Every Day (FEED) program
- Scoping of the ACT school canteen environment and identifying barriers to the provision of a viable canteen service in Australian Capital Territory schools

NAACT also supervised three Bachelor of Nutrition internship students as part of the UC Work Integrated Learning program.



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we transition from our previous strategic plan, we have undertaken a thorough review and refresh of our priorities, setting a clear vision that aligns with the national mission to inspire a connected and nourished Australia.

From 2025 onwards, our focus will centre on building upon our strengths - supporting children, young people, and people living with disability to foster joyful food experiences and nurture positive relationships with food.

Through strong collaboration with government, researchers, and community organisations, we remain committed to creating nourishing, affordable, and sustainable food environments across the ACT.

### Nutrition Australia ACT Strategic Plan 2025 - 2028



#### Our Vision:

Inspiring a connected and nourished Australia

#### Our Purpose:

To help build nourishing, affordable and sustainable food environments for the wellbeing of the ACT and our surrounding areas

### FOCUS AREAS



#### Children and Youth

Create food environments that help children to thrive and build strong foundations for lifelong wellbeing



#### Disability

Deliver accessible services that enable and empower people living with disability to lead nourished and fulfilling lives



#### Community

Listen to the community voice and partner with community-based organisations to develop and deliver meaningful initiatives.



#### Advocacy and Governance

Build a leading Not-for-profit that provides a credible and independent voice to influence the direction of policy

### Our Values

Independence

Inclusive

Collaboration

Integrity

[#nourishedandconnected](#)





Thank you to our Committee of Management, staff, partners, supporters, students and volunteers. Your generous contribution of time, expertise and support provide an important part of the success of Nutrition Australia ACT.

